

From our pristine beaches to the majesty of the Everglades, Florida hosts some of the world's greatest natural treasures. Congress has a moral obligation to make sure our children are left with a planet as environmentally clean as the one we inherited from our ancestors.

Here is where I stand on some of Florida's most pressing environmental issues:

Climate Change

I voted against the Cap and Trade bill last year because it would harm the economy and punish working families, seniors and small businesses with higher energy costs.

With unemployment at its highest level in 35 years in Florida, the last thing Congress should do is jeopardize jobs or impede a swift recovery. Yet that is exactly what the U.S. House did in passing legislation last year aimed at combating global warming.

While global warming is a genuine problem that deserves a serious response, we need to address the issue in a balanced and thoughtful manner that does not further weaken our economy by increasing costs on small businesses, hard-working families and seniors living on fixed incomes.

That's why I supported the responsible, bipartisan Warner-Lieberman bill which would have prevented the worst effects of global warming by steadily reducing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions in a cost-effective manner.

But the partisan legislation recently rushed to the House floor for a vote contained several provisions that would jeopardize jobs and significantly increase energy costs on families and employers. And, as pointed out by President Obama, it would impose punitive tariffs on countries that fail to comply, thereby creating a trade war in the middle of a global recession.

As the debate moves to the Senate, I am hopeful for a bipartisan effort to draft a workable bill to reduce harmful emissions to slow global warming without further weakening a slow economy.

Red Tide

Harmful algal blooms like red tide cause respiratory distress among seniors and children. Red tide is not only an environmental issue, but an economic development issue as well. The harmful effects of red tide have cost Florida's coastal economy an estimated \$240 million, decreasing state revenues. Research shows that 45 percent of red tides over the past 50 years have occurred from the Tampa Bay area south along the coast.

That's why I introduced bipartisan legislation to obtain \$90 million in federal funds for research to help fight this environmentally and economically destructive phenomenon.

Off-shore Drilling

I support environmentally safe domestic drilling as part of a balanced policy to meet our energy needs. We should be drilling now in places such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which holds the single largest deposit of oil in the entire United States. Drilling off the eastern Gulf of Mexico would threaten our natural resources and jeopardize our tourism-based economy.